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فهرس مواضيع العدد الرابع عشر

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ARAB ECONOMIC JOURNAL

Chief Editors : **F. S. SABA,**
B. Com., F.C.R.A., F.R.E.S.
(Responsible Editor)
ADEL JABRE
Economist
Manager : **T. FARAH**

TREATS THE
COMMERCIAL,
INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURAL
AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRIES
IN THE NEAR EAST.

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GOVERNMENT CONTROL & ASSISTANCE IN THE NEAR EAST.

The previous efforts for the advancement of agriculture, industry and other economic activities in the Near East are still apparent, and we can see from time to time clear specimens of these efforts, although in some countries they appear more pronounced than in others.

The general feeling in the world for the last few years is that economic problems within each country and between one country and another are so complicated and acute that it is necessary for the State to take up more duties upon itself to safeguard public interest such as restricting imports, encouraging agriculture and industry, solving labour problems, or participating in the establishment of useful industries. This is done even in the highly developed countries in Europe and America where the public and the different institutions sufficiently educated. This policy of "Government Intervention" is doubtless, all the more necessary in the less developed countries such as those of the Near East.

In Egypt the Government showed a marked policy of assistance and intervention; and although it did not probably fulfill its duties to the fullest degree, yet it is to be congratulated on the steps that it has already been able to take. It has controlled custom duties wisely, encouraged industries that were suitable for the country, assisted agriculture, established a large number of cooperative societies, opened a Department for the Development of Tourism, and has recently done much benefit in holding the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition through the medium of the Royal Agricultural Society. The recent report of the Egyptian Labour Office proves the wisdom in the creation of a special section to deal with labour affairs and problems. It has seen it necessary to limit the immigration of foreign labourers into Egypt to very exceptional cases and this was so rigorously kept that only 499 foreigners were accepted during the last two years.

In Iraq a similar situation is existing, and although there the Government is newly formed yet all signs show that it is quite alert towards its responsibilities in developing the economic resources of the country; and while it has yet a large programme to complete it has already proved to be going in the right direction. It has taken a good step in improving the trade in dates, in bettering working conditions for industrial labour, and is now planning an Agricultural and Industrial Bank for financing both agriculture and industry. It has valued technical education considerably, has sent several Iraquis for technical education abroad, and has at the same time invited foreign experts to study certain economic phases in Iraq and report

thereon. An outstanding activity of which we heard lately is the proposed scheme for the construction of modern villages in which all modern conveniences necessary for a productive villager are available. Besides the direct advantages of such a scheme in securing better conditions of production and healthier bodies for work, we foresee also the psychological effect of these modern villages on the initiative and ambition of the people concerned.

In the Arab Saoudian State we see also a sign of an economic revival although we do not expect to see the movement greatly conspicuous because the circumstances of the country do not perhaps warrant a greater speed. The Government there is anxious to tap its natural resources but it is unwilling to grant concessions to foreigners lavishly fearing that it might entangle itself in political difficulties. The Banque Misr group, who have had a pioneering share in the recent commercial and industrial renaissance in Egypt, seem to be willing to give a brotherly helping hand in effecting new enterprises in Hidjaz, especially in matters which create better conveniences for the Pilgrims from whom a substantial income is yearly received. In his recent visit to Hidjaz, Talaat Harb Pasha, Managing Director of Banque Misr, studied the possibilities of selling bottled water from the Holy "Zamzam Well" generating electricity, asphalting roads, building more up to date hotels and establishing an airline in Hidjaz. It is expected that when a serious institution like Banque Misr initiates the scheme many persons and institutions in the Arab World will be ready to participate.

In the mandated territories of Syria and Palestine, State Control and Assistance have been noticeable but they have not sometimes been well directed with the result that many economic problems still remain unsolved. In some instances the Mandatory is confronted with rigid articles in the Mandate such as Article 18 in the mandate for Palestine which stipulates that "there shall be no discrimination in Palestine against goods originating in or destined for any of the said States." At the time when the said mandate was drafted no state of affairs was envisaged as we have today when nations protect their own interests by creating tariff walls or prohibiting or restricting the importation of certain articles.

It is clear how the Mandate is therefore preventing the Mandatory from reciprocating the restrictive measures which some States place against these territories.

One of the successful activities taken up by the Government in Syria and Lebanon is in diffusing propaganda for summer resorts. The Government is to be congratulated on its good attention in this basic industry. But there are matters which the Government has not taken up as it should, as in the case of several custom duties which prejudiced the interests of the commercial and industrial communities and had to be amended several times. One of the serious requirements in the customs policy between Syria and Palestine is that custom duties on foreign goods should not differ greatly between one country and another; otherwise much difficulty is bound to be experienced whether in the way of smuggling or in throwing on the market of one country goods produced more cheaply by the other country because the foreign raw materials cost it less. It is therefore necessary that such two neighbouring countries should cooperate together in effecting similar legislation so that they may profit more widely from each other's activities.

In Palestine the Government started on a policy of protecting infant industries, and has succeeded in one or two cases; but we think that it has overdone this policy, and has encouraged people to invest in some industries which do not have the necessary elements to be considered as suitable industries which can develop profitably. At the same time the population is paying a higher cost for these articles which are being heavily protected.

In agriculture the Government has done well in fighting insect pests and plant diseases, and has recently shown special attention in making use of agricultural experimental stations. This useful work has been only noticeable during the period of Sir Arthur Wauchope, the present High Commissioner, who is known to be keen and interested in improving agriculture. But much more Control and Assistance are still needed to be exercised by Government in dealing with the Agricultural proplems of the country, especially those which are more basic than the matters already attended to. To be sure of land sufficient for every farmer is a serious problem which is becoming more and more aggravated. The burden of taxation is still too heavy on the rural population and needs several adjustments. In Cooperative societies among agriculturists the Government has done well in helping to establish credit and thrift societies which are financing their members at reasonable rates of interest, and it is only regretted that this was not started several years ago.

PRIVATE INITIATIVE IN ENTERPRISES

The efforts shown by individuals and by institutions in improving economic conditions in the Near East have not been less than those shown by the Governments.

Egypt has already been the leader in both agriculture and industry. In agriculture they are looking for better methods and for the use of manures, and in the field of cooperation the farmers have responded the advice of Government and have established several credit and marketing societies.

In industry much has been done by private initiative, and the present Exhibition in Egypt bears the highest testimony for the success of Egyptian industries. The readers are already aware of the great activities of the Banque Misr group in fostering suitable industries in the country. They established "Imprimerie Misr" with a capital of £E. 50.000, Société Misr pour l'Industrie du Papier with £E. 30.000, S.M. pour le Commerce et l'Egrenage du Coton £E. 250.000, S.M. pour le Transport et la Navigation £E. 150.000, S.M. pour le Theatre et le Cinema £E. 15.000. S.M. pour la Filiature et le Tissage du Coton £E. 450.000, S.M. pour le Tissage de la Soie £E. 30.000, S.M. pour le Line £E. 45.000, S.M. pour les Pêcheries £E. 75.000, S.M. pour l'Exportation du Coton £E. 160.000, Misr Airworks £E. 20.000, Misr General Assurance Co. £E. 200.000, Misr Navigation Co. £E. 100.000, S.M. pour le Tourisme £E. 7000.

In Palestine and Syria we notice a similiar renaissance in both agriculture and industry although in the latter country improvement in agriculture is not so well marked. In Syria several industries sprang up especially in Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut; and among the said industries the following could be noted as examples· The National Cement Co. Ltd. of Damascus, the Chekka Cement Company, the Conserva Co. Ltd., Cortas Brothers, Laiterie Dumit, Diab Textile factory and several others. In Palestine some large and several small industries have been established, and they are now mainly supplying the local market. A new economic action in the Arab section is the recent establishement of the Arab Industrial Bank Ltd. which had up to 3rd. Jan. 1936 a paid-up capital of £P. 10.135. Ahmad Hilmi Pasha and his colleagues bring forward this new institution to help local industries just as the Arab Bank and the Arab Agricultural Bank are helping local commerce and agriculture. Among new local industrial enterprises are the Arab Tobacco and Tombac Co. Ltd. of Nazareth and the Arab Manufacturing Co. Ltd. of Jaffa. It is also understood that the wellknown industrial group (Karaman—Salti—Masri—Haddad) are making preparations for a modern flour mill in haifa and an ice-factory in Jerusalem.

Transjordan seems also getting jealous of its neighbours and we understand that the Transjordan Phosphate Co. assisted with a famous Egyptian geologist made efficient geological surveys on Superphosphate beds with the view of tapping this dormant natural resource in Transjordan. The Zarka-Mayeen-Zara Mineral Spring Co. holds a concession on these famous mineral waters and it is making preparations for creating more conveniences to visitors.

A WISE STEP IN PALESTINE ECONOMY

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

To the person interested in the different economic problems in Palestine and their bearing on General Policy the news of the establishment of the Office of Statistics as a section of the Department of Migration and Statistics was greatly welcomed. It happens that in Palestine, perhaps more than in any other country in the world, most of the political problems are deeply bound with economic considerations, and unless the economic data are unbiased and reliable no safe step could be taken by the Government in dealing with the different problems of the country.

These problems are many and practically in each one of them the Government has depended in the past only on rough information. One of the basic problems on which the success of the country depends is an accurate study of the "absorptive capacity" of the country studied by a technical section that is

free from political considerations. This study is necessary for the benefit of all communities in the country, Arabs, Jews and Mandatory alike. The Arabs do not wish to see any section in the country economically impoverished whether in being displaced from the soil or in being thrown into a state of severe competition in the different walks of life. The Jews have the same need for a wisely controlled economic policy for it does not pay them, nor does it pay the country as a whole, to leave economic difficulties unremedied. Is it not useful to all the inhabitants of Palestine to have Immigration Policy severely restricted so that no excess of people would exist in agriculture, industrial labor, commerce or in any trade or profession? Is it economically wise to discuss restriction only in relation to the Labour Schedule? Are the economic interests of Arab and Jewish local tradesmen, lawyers, doctors, etc. safeguarded from undue competition caused by an oversupply of men in this line of work or the other?

Another serious problem for careful consideration concerns the apparent industrialisation of the country and the proper attitude that the Government could take in the policy of "protection"; and to know how far that policy could be applied. It goes without saying that not all industries have the necessary elements for success in a country. Therefore it is the duty of the Government to be cautious in encouraging and protecting industries; and before affording protection a careful investigation should be made as to the merits that warrant such protection.

These and many other interesting economic questions have for several years needed a special section of Government to devote itself for such studies, and it is earnestly hoped now that Mr. E. Mills, Prof. S.A. Cudmore and the other members of the staff will be able to perform valuable work in this important field and advise Government on every weak point in Palestine Economy.

BRITISH COMMERCIAL AGENT.

The headquarters of Mr. C. Empson, British Commercial Agent will be transferred to Jerusalem on the 1st. April 1936, where his office will be situated in the house previously occupied by Mr. Justice Baker, off the Quatamon Road near the Sports Club. His address will be

Office of the British Commercial Agent
8/63 Greek Colony,
P. O. B. 1173,
Jerusalem.

PALESTINE ROAD COMMUNICATIONS & THE FUTURE ROAD POLICY.

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

The continual development along sound lines of systems of improved highways is one of the most important activities of Governments, both from a social and an economic standpoint. This development, of paramount necessity in Palestine requires, as well as the highest skill in Highway Engineering, careful planning as to policy. It is the future road policy of this country that we shall deal with in this article.

During the past ten years provincial road construction in Palestine has been logically concentrated on main arteries connecting the principal centres of population; as a result there exists today a very excellent network of trunk roads which should be adequate, with proper maintenance, for several years to come.

On the other hand, we have still an enormous mileage of unpaved roads, carrying at present relatively light traffic but with the prospect of steady but gradual increase in traffic density. In many cases these unpaved roads are little more than tracks and in their present condition are satisfactory neither to the inhabitants of the country nor — and this is of considerable importance to Palestine — to the very profitable tourist industry which should flourish increasingly with the help of good roads. Many such roads are even now impassable in winter and any money spent on maintenance during dry weather is lost during the rains.

That this improved mileage should be increased as rapidly as possible is apparent to anyone with the interests of the rural districts in mind. Not only does such improvement better the condition of the fellah by giving him an all-year outlet for his produce, but it also reduces taxes through diminishing the annual drain of money spent on the maintenance of uneconomic road surfaces. It should be added that in the townships themselves, except in isolated cases near large centres of population, the need for wide-scale improvement is not so urgent.

The Government's gradual appreciation of the need for internal road development is illustrated in their extensive constructional programme, two good examples being the Ramallah-Beit Sira-Latrun road and the Jenin-Megiddo-Haifa road (now almost completed).

Of more obvious immediate significance is the plan to extend the Jaffa/Haifa coastal road by some kilometres north of Ranaana. Development in this direction is, however, slow and this is all the more regrettable when the immense importance of good permanent communication between the orange belt and the ports of Haifa and Jaffa is recalled.

Not only has the orange growing industry hitherto been inadequately served by the Palestine Railways but it is evident that the problem of shipping oranges away from Palestine, without the breakdown and congestion that have been witnessed in past years, can only be solved efficiently when the construction of a first-class highway between Jaffa and Haifa along the coastal plain is completed. The benefit to the condition of the fruit leaving the country as a result of the elimination of one handling operation would be of no less importance than the saving in time that would result from growers' ability to despatch fruit direct from grove to ship's side — and that at either Jaffa or, preferably, Haifa, where shipping-off conditions are of course superior.

Feeder roads connecting the groves with the main road are the natural supplement to the main coastal road and would provide the necessary facility to ensure quick and efficient transport service from grove to quay at economic rates. Feeder roads connecting groves with the railway are hardly of less importance. As yet no steps have been taken in either direction, to the probable detriment of Palestine's one staple industry, if the export of oranges can be called an industry, and this demands urgent consideration by the Government's road experts.

In other directions, however, the Government's programme is more promising and we have the prospect of the completion of a road from the Salameh quarter of Jaffa to the new air-port at Lydda in the course of the next eighteen months. To those motorists who are nowadays obliged to face the inconvenience, and even the dangers, of the existing Jaffa-Jerusalem road via Beit Dajan, the prospect of a finely surfaced, broad highway, which will enable them to by-pass the appalling congestion of the Jaffa-Gaza and Jaffa-Ramleh traffic, must be comforting. In the course of time this road will be extended due east of Lydda to Jerusalem, thus considerably shortening the Jaffa-Jerusalem span.

A further concession to the needs of the rapidly increasing inter-urban traffic is to be made in the widening of many of the existing main roads, and in particular those forming the exits from Jaffa.

There seems in fact to be good reason to suppose that Government will adopt a long-sighted view in promoting road transport in Palestine and in maintaining a nicely-adjusted balance between the claims of road and rail so that each branch can be of maximum service to the community. In the haste to push ahead with internal communications, however, one must not lose sight of the primary importance, to Palestine, of providing adequate lines of communication with our Arabic-speaking neighbours, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The possibilities arising out of a system of good roads connecting all these countries are enormous and the resultant benefits to this country, as the hub of eastern Mediterranean industry, very material.

While a certain amount of progress has been made in the construction of roads connecting Semakh and Jisr-el-Majami in the Jordan Valley with Irbid in Transjordan, and Jericho with Es Salt and Amman, progress is likely to be slow and in the meantime the journey even as far as Transjordan

still presents difficulties in some weather which render the use of powerful and strongly built cars essential.

Excellent roads connect Palestine with Syria either via Roach-Pina in the northeast or via Nakoura in the northwest, but the real benefit of these will only be seen when the through-road across the Sinai Desert from Suez is carried up through Beersheba to Jerusalem, thus enabling hundreds of tourists from Egypt, including many Egyptians themselves, to drive in comfort through Palestine to the Lebanon. Although there has been a certain amount of work at the Suez end of the road, and the road itself south of Beersheba is vastly improved, the Cairo-Jerusalem journey is still something of an undertaking and is too arduous to appeal to the majority of tourists, who prefer the comfort of the railway sleeper or the speed of the Misr Airwork daily air service, although either of these entail considerably greater expenditure than would be incurred in the trans-Sinai motor trip.

Summing up, we may say, therefore, that Palestine needs:

1. A rapid expansion of reasonable highway facilities on the unpaved sections of the Provincial highways so that advantages of all weather, smooth, dustless roads may accrue to the rural population of the country at a cost commensurate with probable traffic density.

2. The immediate development of good road communication with our Arabic-speaking neighbours to whom the need for access is growing greater year by year.

It is relevant to emphasize, in advocating such a policy, the proven fact that the increase in revenue to Government, deriving from taxation on petrol, tyres, vehicles etc., is exceedingly large by comparison with the comparatively moderate outlay involved in the construction of good roads. Particularly is this the case with modern roads, bearing in mind the progress made not only in the science of road construction, but in the design of modern motor vehicles, with their more evenly distributed axle-loads, and of modern low-pressure tyres, as a result of which factors road-maintenance now represents a fraction of what it used to cost.

It is to be hoped that Government will not be slow to recognize this fact in formulating their future road policy.

A DISCOVERY FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF NATURAL POMEGRANATE JUICE.

BY MR. T.P. MALOUF, M. Sc., RESEARCH AGRICULTURAL CHEMIST.

It is not necessary to allude that no attention has been given to the development of pomegranate orchards or groves in Palestine. The people as well as the Government of Palestine had always reasoned that the development of pomegranate groves was a question of minor importance in the economic upbuilding of this country. The reason for this assumption was the uneconomic importance of that fruit tree as compared to the economic importance of the orange, the olive, and the grape vine tree. The neglect of the pomegranate tree is therefore due to the ignorance of its value, which is a direct result of the lack of chemical research on the juice of pomegranete. Is it justifiable to remain badly informed on the subject?

The Government of Palestine requested the responsible authorities to find whether there was any reason to utilize pomegranates, grown in several parts of Palestine, for export or other use on a large scale. This problem was referred to me for investigation.

• Several persons had done research on pomegranates in Europe and America, but sufficient information could not be found to answer our question. And it is best, furthermore, to study our own varieties. A study of the concerned literature revealed three possibilities:

1. The carbohydrates (in this case sugars) of pomegranate juice consists, after Borntraeger and Paris, Bigelow and Dunbar, exclusively of fructose (fruit sugar), which could be valuable from a medical point of view, since according to current views fructose is a sugar digestible for diabetics. This would help Diabetic persons.

2. According to the literature the vitamin C (Anti-Scorbutic Vitamin) content of pomegranates has been said to be unusually high. This would help against the scurvy disease.

3. Professor Cruess of California suggested a certain value of the juice in combatting "acidosis" because of its probable high content of organic salts that have a basic residue on digestion".

Therefore, the literature suggested some possible uses of pomegranate juice on a commercial basis. Whether this was true in general, or at least if it is true with the pomegranates in Palestine it remains to be seen.

Immediately work was started on four Palestinian varieties to determine the most important chemical constituents therein; the two varieties, Mallici and Sharabi, were sent by the horticultural officer of Nazareth; and the other two varieties Hamud and Hilu were sent by the horticultural officer of Ramallah.

To discover the truth in the first claims the sugars contained in the natural pomegranate juice were determined. The following table gives the results of such study.

TABLE I.

The percentage of the different kinds of sugars in the natural pomegranate juice.

		Mellici	Hilu	Sherabi	Hamud
Fructose	%	5.54	6.62	7.99	3.24
Glucose	»	11.30	11.34	10.71	12.26
Sucrose	»	8.50	5.69	6.70	1.60
Total sugars	»	25.34	23.65	25.40	17.10

Secondary, the amount of Vitamin C (Anti-Scorbutic Vitamin) was determined on the natural juice of each variety to discover the truth in the second assertion.

TABLE II.

The Percentage of Vitamin C in the Natural Juice of Four Varieties of Pomegranates.

Mellici	0.0036	%
Hilu	0.0063	%
Sherabi	0.0058	%
Hamud	0.022	%

Thirdly, the total acidity, citric acid, and, ash content of the natural juice of pomegranates were determined, as seen in the following table.

TABLE III

Variety	Ash %	Citric Acid %	Total Acidity c.c.N. Na OH per 100c.c. Juice
Mellici	0.35	0.00	7.35
Hilu	0.36	0.12	18.21
Sherabi	0.37	1.10	54.55
Hamud	0.34	1.69	58.98

What was the conclusion that could be drawn from the above mentioned results? First and foremost, that the three possibilities mentioned in the literature were unfounded. After very careful and repeated determinations it was revealed that the carbohydrates (in this case sugars) did not consist exclusively of fructose, but had other sugars such as glucose and sucrose. These latter are not favourable to diabetics. But it must be said with all fairness that the juice of pomegranates contained more fructose (6%) than is found in orange juice (1.6%); therefore, sugars of the pomegranate are more easily digestible. The figures also show that the Hamud variety show least amounts of sucrose; this is due to the fact that in an acid medium sucrose is split into glucose and fructose. Furthermore, it is readily observed that natural pomegranate juice contains slightly more than three times as much sugar as is found in the orange juice; that is to say pomegranate juice contains approximately 23% total sugars whereas orange juice contains only 7%.

The Vitamin C (Anti-Scorbutic Vitamin) has been found in small amounts in Pomegranates. Only the Hamud variety contains an amount comparable with the juice of oranges. Hamud, therefore, not only contains the most readily digestible sugars of the four varieties, but also has most vitamins. The sour pomegranates are a good source of vitamin D, but by no means the only or the best source.

The Acid determination on these varieties reveals that the Hilu and Mellici (two sweetest varieties) contain almost no citric acid and little total acidity. The Hamud and Sherabi variety contained 30% and 22% citric acid of total acidity; in other words these two varieties contained higher amounts of citric acid than was usually found in orange juice. Besides, the ash of pomegranate juice contained sodium, Potassium and traces of iron.

One can conclude from these studies that varieties differ in chemical composition, and in the amounts of any of the ingredients. On the whole the pomegranate is a delicious fruit and a strong favorite in the summer season. Its physiological effects on the body are as good as the orange it not better. Its assumed merits as a remedy for some diseases are unfounded.

Although pomegranates, similar to oranges, can be shipped to Europe as fresh fruits it seems most advisable to send it as a juice. In order to utilize the juice of the pomegranates to the best advantage a method was discovered for the production of concentrated pomegranate juice. It was possible for me, through the use of the most modern machinery to produce a fresh concentrated pomegranates juice which would last for an indefinite period without spoiling by molds. In this new method no heat or any chemical or other artificial preservations are used. Simply by a double application of partial freezing and separation it was possible to obtain a thick syrupy mass (for details inquire from the writer). The new concentrated pomegranate juice obtained retaines all the constituents, freshness, and flavor of the natural juice, and dissolves readily in water. It is interesting to note that this new method is inexpensive as compared with old methods.

The following tables give an idea about the chemical composition of the natural juice, the concentrated juice, and the water which is drawn from the pomegranate juice after the operation of separation.

TABLE IV.

Chemical Constituents of the Juice of the Mellici Variety at Different Concentrations.

Constituents		Natural Juice	Concentrated Juice	Extracted Water
Fructose	%	5.54	11.69	0.42
Glucose	%	11.30	23.81	2.52
Sucrose	%	8.50	15.65	0.54
Total sugars	%	25.34	51.15	3.48
Citric Acid	%	0.00	0.00	0.00
PH. Value (Acidity)		3.3	3.6	3.1
Specific Gravity		1.006	1.1342	1.0153
Ash		0.35	1.22	0.13

TABLE V.

Chemical Constituents of the Juice of the Hilu Variety at Different Concentrations

Constituents		Natural Juice	Concen- trated Juice	Extracted Water
Fructose	°/o	6.62	14.62	0.50
Glucose	°/o	11.34	19.78	3.00
Sucrose	°/o	5.69	11.50	0.30
Total sugars	°/o	23.65	45.90	3.80
Citric Acid	°/o	0.12	0.42	0.00
PH. Value (Acidity)		3.1	3.4	3.00
Specific Gravity		1.071	1.1302	1.0130
Ash		0.36	1.20	0.10

TABLE VI.

Chemical Constituents of the Juice of the Sherabi Variety at Different Concentrations

Constituents		Natural Juice	Concen- trated Juice	Extracted Water
Fructose	°/o	7.99	16.47	0.38
Glucose	°/o	10.71	16.93	2.66
Sucrose	°/o	6.70	14.00	0.45
Total sugars	°/o	25.40	47.40	3.49
Citric Acid	°/o	1.10	3.42	0.00
PH. Value (Acidity)		2.6	2.6	2.4
Specific Gravity		1.070	1.1341	1.0141
Ash	°/o	0.37	1.23	0.11

TABLE VII.

Chemical Constituents of the Juice of the Hamud Variety at Different Concentrations.

Constituents		Natural Juice	Concen- trated Juice	Extracted Water
Fructose	°/o	3.24	6.12	0.40
Glucose	°/o	12.26	21.84	2.70
Sucrose	°/o	1.60	2.67	0.38
Total sugars	°/o	17.10	30.63	3.48
Citric Acid	°/o	1.69	4.46	0.00
PH. Value (Acidity)		2.	2.4	2.1
Specific Gravity		1.0730	1.1470	1.0161
Ash	°/o	0.34	1.32	0.12

A glance at the tables shows that in all cases the constituents present in natural juice were doubled in the concentrated juice and almost nil in the remaining water, as an example the natural juice of the Sherabi (Table VI) variety contained 25.40°/o total sugar, the concentrated juice contained 47.40°/o total sugar, and the extracted water contained only 3.49°/o total sugar. The same goes for the other varieties. It is interesting to note that the citric acid was not lost in the water part but remained in the concentrated juice. As an example, the natural juice of Hamud variety (Table VII) coutained 1.69°/o citric acid, the concentrased juice contained 4.46°/o citric acid, and the extracted water contained no traces of citric acid.

The advantages of this new concentrated juice are obvious. It is a concentrated juice with the flavor of the natural juice, a flavor which remains in the concentrated juice for an indefinite time. The use of this method avoids the use of heat, which not only deflavours the juice, but destroys its vitamin C content. Therefore, it has an advantage in that its vitamins are preserved. This process, however, failed to produce an orange juice which would last long because the sugar content of natural and concentrated orange juice is indeed very low.

A word must be said about the yield of the diffrent pomegranate varieties. The two varieties from Ramallah (Hamud and Hilu) yielded 1.2 liters of natural juice for ten fruits. The two Nazareth varieties, yielded 1.5 liters for each ten fruits. However, after the operation of freezing and extraction the four varieties produced almost equal amounts of concentrates. This means that every ten fruits can produce a little more than half a liter of concentrated juice of commercial value if the fruit of pomegranates is sufficiently cheap.

Having finished the preliminary chemical studies on the pomegranate, it is necessary to know what conclusions can be drawn about the utility of such a fruit. Although there remains much chemical work which should be done in order to come to a definite conclusion one can say from what has been done so far that the days when the pomegranate fruit will become of commercial importance are near indeed. There is no doubt as to the value of the fruit as a commercial item. Its chemical constituents are not unlike the orange, if not better in certain aspects. It has the advantage of possessing a greater amount of sugar which permits

the production of a natural concentrated juice of excellent qualities, something which cannot be made from an orange.

One important question must be solved before a correct judgement as to the commercial value of the fruit can be predicted. Will it be possible to produce the fruits in large enough quantities for shipment abroad as fruit or as concentrated juice? The answer to this question depends on the availability of suitable land for the growth of the pomegranate tree. At present the district of Nazareth seems the most suitable for its culture; the environs of Ramallah harbor some of these fruit trees. Will not some of the level land at the foothills on the western side of Palestine do for the growing of Pomegranate trees?

Thorough study must be made to determine carefully the extent and suitability of these lands.

If great areas of land suitable to the growth of pomegranate trees can be found the fruits will become another large agricultural enterprise in Palestine. A new field will be open for the farmer, laborer, industrialist, commission agent, and retail dealer. This means employment and profit for thousands of persons. And it means that a new commercial concentrated juice of exceptional qualities, will be available to the consumer. It is therefore necessary to continue the research on this question after which a policy can be outline to further utilize our land to the best of our ability and knowledge.

Les Ressources Agricoles & l'Economie Rurale de la Syrie et du Liban.

Par MR. JEAN DEBBANÉ, Saida Ingénieur de l'Ecole Coloniale.

La Situation de notre Arboriculture et ses Exigences.

Si la Syrie est un pays surtout céréalier, le Liban est un pays essentiellement fruitier. A tous ses étages, dans tous ses sols fleurissent des arbres fruitiers de toutes sortes depuis le bananier, plante tropicale, jusqu'au poirier et au cérisier, arbres des pays tempérés, en passant par l'oranger, le pêcher, la vigne, et l'olivier.

Noter les exigences techniques et commerciales de de chacune de ces cultures serait ici évidemment impossible.

Précisons rapidement l'importance de cette branche de l'économie nationale; insistons sur les dangers qui la guettent, et les mesures à prendre pour la sauver.

La Culture et le Commerce des Agrumes.— Les Agrumes qui sont chez nous par ordre d'importance croissante le mandarinier, le citronier, et l'oranger, occupent sur le littoral libanais une étendue d'environ 2.500 hectares, donnant une production totale moyenne d'environ 1.200·000 à 2.000.000 de caisses de 35 à 40 kilos. Ils alimentent un commerce considérable, font vivre, presque exclusivement deux villes: Tripoli et Saida.

Le littoral libanais, tant au point de vue sol que climat, est vraiment le pays d'élection des Agrumes; aussi la saveur des oranges libanaises est-elle incomparable et préférée par les importateurs européens à toutes celles du bassin méditerranéen.

D'autre part la bande côtière syrienne présente la possibilité de cultiver aussi les agrumes qui n'y couvrent encore qu'une centaine d'hectares. Quant au Libant, entre Nakoura et Tripoli s'étendent près de 10.000 hectares irriguables encores réservés au mûrier ou aux céréales, qui devraient rationnellement se transformer en orangeraies, mais seulement au fur et à mesure de la conquête de nouveaux débouchés et de leur organisation.

Actuellement une petite partie seulement de notre production agrumifère est exportée: du 1er Septembre 1934 au 1er Septembre 1935 près de 200.000 caisses principalement en Angleterre, Allemagne, Turquie, Roumanie, etc.

Malgré la qualité de nos fruits, et la faveur qu'ils rencontrent de plus en plus, le commerce des agrumes tout en accusant une certaine progression, ne s'est pas développé comme on aurait pu s'y attendre, pour des motifs trop longs à exposer en détails mais que nous essaierons de résumer.

Depuis quelques années la clientèle internationale est devenue très exigente sur la présentation des produits agricoles. Or l'écorce de nos oranges et citrons est parasité comme partout ailleurs par un insecte ou plutôt un groupe d'insectes les cochenilles (pou noir, pou rouge, etc.) qui tâchent les fruits et affaiblissent les arbres.

Le Gouvernment Libanais a eu l'heureuse initiative de créer, il est vrai, un Service de Contrôle des Fruits à l'Exportation. Mais en dépit des facilités et de la prime consenties à cet effet par l'Administration, les propriétaires intéressés n'ont eu recours que dans des limites encore restreintes à la pulvérisation ou à la fumigation des orangers et citronniers les deux méthodes techniques de désinfection des orangeraies utilisées en grand dans les divers pays agrumifères.

Cette absentention doit être attribuée à la crise de trésorerie aigüe qui sévit parmi nos milieux agricoles et aussi au fait que la prime n'ext accordée qu'en cas de fumigation à raison de 10 piastres par arbre traité. Les citriculteurs réclament avec raison qu'elle soit étendue, (à un moindre taux) aux opérations de pulvérisation, plus facile à entreprendre et moins coûteuses.

D'autre part, le Liban a pardu ses anciens clients d'agrumes. la Turquie et l'Egypte — et même en grande partie la Russie. Les marchés anglais et allemands lui sont très disputés sauf pour les citrons de primeur.

C'est sur le marché français qui apprécie particulièrement nos agrumes — le Français aime les fruits doux et très juteux tandis que l'anglais par exemple est davantage attiré par une forme somptueuse telle que celle de l'orange de Jaffa — que nous devrons surtout compter à l'avenir; car le Gouveanement Français approuve, nous en sommes

sûrs, le vœu émis par la Conférence Economique de la France Métropolitaine et d'Outre-Mer, quant à l'octroi aux Etats du Levant sous Mandat d'un contingent en franchise de 100.000 quintaux d'oranges et de 75.000 quintaux de citrons, qui ne représenterait suivant nos calculs que de 1 à 3% de l'importation française!

Remarquons en passant qu'il conviendrait de limiter le nombre excessif — et qui augmente chaque année — de nos variétés d'oranges à deux ou trois seulement suivant le goût des consommateurs, et de sélectionner ces variétés tout en effectuant des expérimentations culturales pour les vulgariser ensuite.

Ainsi, si la fumure est souvent soignée, les opérations de taille sont généralement négligées.

Ces expérimentations seraient très utilement confiées à un établissement de recherches agronomiques et commerciales dont on parlera plus loin.

La Culture du Bananier. — Elle est inséparable de l'oranger auquel on a raison de l'associer en attendant que l'oranger croisse et donne un revenu et présente une importance croissante. Elle couvre aujourd'hui au Liban 1250 hectares et dans le pays des Alaouites 60. Au point de vue technique le centre libanais de Damour a réalisé dernièrement des progrès remarquables.

Convenablement encouragés, ces 1300 hectares devraient produire au moins 400.000 quintaux. Cet encouragement consiste à obtenir l'entrée de nos bananes, indemnes de maladies, en Palestine, pays importateur.

D'autre part, nos producteurs et nos pouvoirs publics ont demandé avec insistance l'octroi en France d'un contingent de bananes en franchise. La Conférence Economique a fixé ce contingent à 15.000 quintaux; c'est là un chiffre infime (moins de 1%) par raport à la consommation française qui a atteint en (1933) 2.385.480 quintaux métriques de bananes.

Les colonies françaises productrices ne sauraient donc prendre ombrage de cet éventuel contingent. Et pourtant il est question de nous le refuser!

Le bananier ne fructifie normalement que sur une bande étroite de notre littoral (encore faut-il que celui-ci ne soit pas trop exposé aux vents); il y voisine avec les agrumes, le néflier, le grenadier.

A l'intérieur et dans nos montagnes, on a cultivé de tout temps, outre l'abricotier qui a fait la célébrité de la Ghouta de Damas, diverses sortes d'arbres fruitiers à pépins et à noyaux. Les conditions naturelles (sol, altitude, absence de gelée blanche...) aussi bien que les circonstances économiques (crise de la sériculture, faveur grandissante dont jouissent les beaux fruits sur les marchés mondiaux, proximité de la Palestine moins bien placée que notre pays pour cette production...) mettent au premier plan de nos ressources nationales cette branche de l'arboriculture fruitière.

D'ores et déjà, après la culture des céréales, celle des arbres fruitiers occupe les superficies les plus étendues et donne chaque année en moyenne 400 à 800.000 quintaux métriques (sans compter les Agrumes, les vignes et oliviers). Mais l'avenir de notre arboriculture fruitière suscite des inquiétudes tant au point de vue technique que commercial.

L'Inorganisation de notre production fruitière : Les causes et les remèdes. — Depuis quelques années en effet, nos cultivateurs plantent beaucoup à côté de nos variétés locales excellentes et acclimatées par l'œuvre du temps, de nouvelles variétés étrangères aux qualités séduisantes, mais importées au petit bonheur.

D'autre part pour favoriser le dévelopement de l'Arboriculture, le Gouvernement syrien, libanais et alaouites ont créé de vastes pépinières. Celles-ci distribuent aux agriculteurs quantités de pieds greffés, pour la plupart en variétés améliorés dont les pieds fournissant les greffons ont été importés de l'étranger, principalement de France et d'Italie.

Malheureusement une pépinière n'est et ne peut être qu'un fournisseur de semences et de plants. Elle doit, dans le cas des variétés étrangères, ou de lutte contre les maladies et les insectes, recevoir, les directives d'un établissement de recherches et d'expérimentations bien placé pour sélectionner les innombrables variétés fruitières indigènes ou importées et orienter l'activité des milieux ruraux.

Or qu'arrive-t-il? Nos cultivateurs plantent n'importe quelle variété de plant, dans n'importe quel sol, à n'importe quelle altitude avec des soins quelconques — quoi d'étonnant ensuite s'ils sont déçus s'ils obtiennent de fruits rabougris ou en dehors de la date qu'ils avaient escomptée, indiquée par le pépiniériste étranger — de plus ils ignorent quelles précautions prendre pour éviter les maladies qui compromettent annuellement une grosse part de notre production?

La Société libanaise des Amis des Arbres, dont la création est toute récente, s'est émue de cette situation et pour combler cette lacune, elle étudie un projet de création d'un Office Libanais d'Arbre fruitier. L'activité de cet établissement s'étendrait d'ailleurs à toutes les branches

de notre Arboriculture fruitière; ainsi nos plantations d'agrumes actuelles continuent toujours à être constituées par de nombreuses variétcs mal différenciées. Cette multiplicité met le producteur dans l'impossibilité de réalrser une présentation uniforme et de céder des livraisons régulières, caractéristique à laquelle le commerce international tient de plus en plus. Le rôle de l'Office consistera aussi à étudier les avantages techniques et les débouchés commerciaux et le mérite de chaque variété pour diffuser les résultats obtenus nans les milieux intéressés au moyen des pépinières existantes.

En attendant un rayon d'action que seul l'Office fruitier pourra assurer, la Direction libanaise de l'Agriculture laquelle, comme la Direction syrienne, dispose de fonds dérisoires par rapport à l'œuvre considérable qui lui incombe, a publié en langue arabe depuis 1933 de bcochures de vulgarisation sur les cultures fruitières et les maladies qui les attaquent. Elles renferment des renseignements utiles quoique forcément incomplets, pour les motils déja indiqués.

L'Oléiculture et la Viticulture.— On n'aurait qu'une idée très imparfaite de notre Arboriculture fruitière si l'on négligeait dans cette étude la place occupée chez nous par la vigne et l'olivier. Son cadre ne nous permettant pas d'envisager la situation de ces deux cultures nationales qui méritent des encouragements formels pour leur qualités de rusticité et l'importance de leur étendue; (39.000 hectares pour la vigne, plus de 60.000 pour l'olivier) nous devrons nous contenter à cet égard de citer des références.

M. Joseph Nahas, l'animateur du Comité Viticole de la Békaa a étudié la question viticole sous ses divers aspects. Dans plusieurs rapports, il a demandé aux autorités la protection des industries dérivées de la vigne, actuellement concurrencée par les alcools produits avec des matières sucrées et amylacées notamment les alcools de maïs. Il est à noter que la législation turque prohibait cette concurrence. Le Comité revendique aussi la diminution des taxes sur l'arack. Espérons que les pouvoirs publics voudront bien prendre en considération les conclusions approfondies de M. Nahas dont il faut souhaiter une prochaine et complète publication.

Le sort fait chez nous à l'olivier n'est guère plus enviable. Nos huiles souffrent surtout d'une fraude éhontée pratiquée avec des huiles végétales diverses (de tournesol, de lin, surtout d'arachides). Cette fraude a causé une baisse très accentuée des cours de la bonne huile d'olive que la Palestine et d'autres pays nous achèteraient volontiers. Ces huiles irréprochables sont confondues en effet avec les huiles falsifiées. La création d'un Service des Fraudes souvent réclamée est aussi indispensable que celle récemment décidée du Service de poids et mesures.

A côté de la vigne et de l'olivier, **l'ammandier** et le **figuier**, friands de nos nombreuses terres très calcaires, pauvres, méritent une mention spéciale. Nos figues dont la production atteint 200.000 quinteaux soutiennent la comparaison evec les meilleures du bassin méditérrannéen mais on ne sait toujours pas les préparer, et leur faire la propagande nécessaire; pendant ce temps des paquets de figues sèches (ou plutôt desséchées) de Grèce ou de Smyrne mais joliment en paquet se vendent dans les boutiques de Beyrouth! . . .

Gonvenablement orientée, l'Arboriculture fruitière pourrait et devrait constituer avec le tourisme et l'estivage, la principale ressource du Liban et augmenter considérablement les exportations de la Syrie.

COUP D'OEIL SUR D'AUTRES CHAPITRES ET CONCLUSIONS.

Nous nous rendons compte de l'Insuffisance des pages qui précèdent à donner une idée complète de l'Agriculture libano-syrienne, de la crise qui l'atteint et de ses perspectives d'avenir.

Nous n'avons rien pu dire de bien des cultures secondaires ou même importantes, céréalières, industrielles ou arbustives: orge, tabac, mûrier, etc. et des industries diverses auxquelles elles donnent ou pourraient chez nous donner naissance dans leur rapport avec la production nationale (confiseries, brasseries, distilleries...)

Les divers élevages pratiques dans les Etats sous Mandat (bovidés, ovines, caprines,...) n'ont pas trouvé place non plus dans cette étude. Ils s'y prêtent pourtant à des constatations intéressantes: l'élevage du mouton surtout fournit une grosse quantité de laines exportables. Grâce à la collaboration des Services Vétérinaires des Etats et de l'Union Ovine Coloniale de beaux résultats ont été réalisés. L'effort s'est principalement orienté vers l'amélioration des conditions d'exploitation du cheptel indigène, pendant que les Servtces des Études Hydrauliques poursuivaient le forage des puits entrepris sur les pistes de transhumance.

Notons ici que les essais d'améliorations de laines syriennes par l'introduction de mérinos et le croisement de ces mérinos avec la race awas de Syrie, nous écrit M. Atallah, Directeur de l'Agriculture de Syrie, a donné de bons résultats techniques. Mais économiquement la spéculation animale en vigueur en Syrie donne de meilleurs résultats. En effet, s'il y a amélioration de la laine chez les ovins croisés, il y a diminution dans le rendement laitier et le beuré.

Le Reboisement mériterait à lui seul une étude détaillée. Concurremment à celle de l'irrigation et contrairement au problème [de l'organisation technique au problème de l'organisation technique et la production, dont notre opinion ne saisit pas encore l'importance, cette question s'est posée dès les premiers jours du Mandat. L'an dernier répondant aux préoccupations de l'élite libanaise, la "Société des Amis des Arbres" a été fondée pour encourager les pouvoirs publics dans l'œuvre du reboisement et le développement de l'Arboriculture fruitière.

Mais comme le note le Comité de Redressement économique, "le reboisement est une entreprise qui demande un premier capital assez considérable, des frais et des efforts d'entretien que les particuliers, surtout dans un pays pauvre, ne peuvent pas assurer... Il exige une législation fiscale appropriée, un système de cantonnement pour le cheptel, surtout pour les troupeaux de chèvres".

Enfin le reboisement rationnellement éxécuté suppose l'étude des diverses essences forestières afin de les adapter aux milieux et ces milieux à reboiser sont de nature agrologique et climatérique très diverse au Liban.

La Société des Amis des Arbres l'a compris ; par ses soins et grâce à l'aide qus cette initiative a trouvé auprès de la Direction de l'Agriculture, sera prochainement publié un tableau concret et précis des exigences, des essences les plus intéressantes à répandre dans notre pays, en attendant de plus sérieuses expérimentations.

La production agricole est liée de près à bien de porblèmes de nature commerciale, fiscale, économique, juridique,etc. etc. Ceux de l'outillage, des impôts, de la politique douanière, des débouchés, ont été traîtés avec compétence dans le raport détaillé présenté au Haut-Commissaire par le Comité libanais de Redressement Economique dont mention a été faite plus haut.

De même une mise en valeur rationnelle suppose des servicés techniques dirigés par un cadre de spécialistes tout comme il en est pour les Directions des Travaux Publics, une organisation bancaire non seulement de Crédit hypothécaire mais aussi de Crédit personnel.

Nous nous sommes, en collaboration avec M. Karam Atallah, étendus en particulier sur ces problèmes de l'organisation technique et des Modalités du Crédit Agricole entre autres dans l'étude sur "La mise en valeur Agricole des Etats sous Mandat" redigée à l'intention du Congrès Economique de Damas, au Nom du Syndicat Agricole de Saida, (et qui à été présentée aux autorités.

On trouvera aussi dans l'enquête ouverte par le Journal "L'Orient" en Mars-Avril 1933 beaucoup de points de vue intéressants, observations, pertinentes sur notre développement agricole inséparable de l'économie générale du pays. Tel est bien le sentiment de nos milieux d'affaires ; pourquoi faut-il cependant que les budgets des Etats sous Mandat qui ne réservent à l'Agriculture que $2^1/_2$ % de leur totalité n'en tiennent nullement compte ? Tel est le refrain de notre presse, tel est même l'avis des pouvoirs publics.

Nous trouvons utile toutefois de formuler une remarque, quitte à nous répéter : trop souvent nos gouvernants, nos commerçants, nos ingénieurs, nos journalistes ont multiplié ces dernières années leurs appels à l'Administration en faveur de l'irrigation. Ils demeurent, à notre avis, trop vivement frappés par le rôle de "Grenier de Rome" joué jadis par la Syrie. Attribuant avec juste raison cette prospérité des temps révolus aux splendides canalisations édifiées par l'Empire Romain jusqu'en plein désert, ils en concluent hâtivement que seules des irrigations abondantes et généralisées redonneraient à notre pays richesse et prospérité.

Etrange simplisme: comment peut-on oublier les conditions économiques actuelles si différentes de l'époque romaine? Ce disant nous tenons compte de la nécessité de régulariser notre production de céréales qui augmenterait le pouvoir d'achat des cultivateurs. Il faut se rappeler toutefois qu'il vaut mieux produire 50 quintaux de blé et les vendre à 200 piastres plutôt que 100 qui seraient écoulés à 150. L'exemple des pays qui jettent leur café à la mer ou qui brûlent leur blé doit nous inciter à la prudence. Il y a là une question d'équilibre et de mesure à serrer de près.

Aujourd'hui il importe de vendre plus que de produire observation évidente mais qu'il ne semble pas superflu de souligner. L'exécution de toute entreprise d'irrigation doit être subordonnée à une étude approfondie non seulement hydraulique mais surtout agricole et financière et commerciale.

La Législation Foncière. Si l'exécution du programme agricole est encore dans l'ensemble à peine amorcée, au point de vue financier, commercial et technique, par contre pour ce qui a trait à la législation foncière une magnifique œuvre a été entreprise et s'est méthodiquement poursuivie. Il sied ici d'en souligner brièvement la portée, tant urbaine que rurale.

Pour donner à la propriété la certitude et l'assiette qui lui manquaient, il a paru que le moyen le plus sûr était l'institution du Livre Foncier. Celui-ci constitue en quelque sorte l'état civil complet de chaque immeuble puisqu'il permet de connaître rapidement ses origines, son histoire, sa situation juridique à toute époque. Un plan de l'immeuble est en outre annexé au feuillet.

Afin que ce plan comporte toute la précision nécessaire, on procède aux opérations de récensement et de délimitation des immeubles comportant l'établissement méthodique des villes et des régions agricoles.

Déjà des centaines de milliers d'hectares ont été ainsi délimités, abornés, souvent purgés d'un umbroglio de difficultés juridiques ou de servitudes surannées. Une remarque s'impose ici : il est urgent, là où les travaux du cadastre ont été achevés, d'opérer d'une façon définitive la purge des droits sur les eaux, de les enrégistrer définitivement aux Services fonciers, car actuellement l'irrigation dans bien des régions est cause de crimes, d'iniquités et de litiges sans fin.

On ne saurait trop insister sur l'importance de cette réforme qui a stabilisé la propriété, a stimulé les prêts hypothécaires et permettra un réajustement rationnel de l'assiette des impôts actuellement prélevés suivant des répartitions odieuses et des évaluations fantaisistes.

Espérons que, sous l'impulsion du Comte de Martel la mise en valeur agricole des magnifiques ressources naturelles de notre pays sera progressivement réalisée avec cet esprit de méthode, cette hauteur de vues qui, seules assurent à une œuvre le succès et la pérennité.

Souhaitons cette éxécution toute proche (jusqu'à ce jour ou a surtout songé aux irrigations sans en réaliser d'ailleurs beaucoup) sous peine pour l'économie libano-syrienne dont notre Haut-Commissaire a déjà servi brillamment les intérêts, de voir se perdre encore ses forces vives parce que gouvernants et gouvernés n'auront pas voulu ou su donner chez nous à la terre sa vraie place, place triplement dictée par les données géologiques, les facteurs géographiques, les statistiques et les nécessités économiques de notre pays. Toutes ces indications sont d'ailleurs précisement corroborées par les enseignements de l'Histoire de la Syrie à travers les âges.

Enfin, ces considérations scientifiques tirées de la nature même de nos ressources et de nos besoins, se trouvent appuyées par la nature de l'évolution sociale qu'il convient de provoquer dans notre pays. Protéger les produits du sol, développer l'agriculture, n'est-ce pas en effet asseoir la stabilité générale de ce pays, le paysan a toujours été — par bonheur pour nos classes dirigeantes . . . — un élément d'ordre et de modération, souvent excessive . .

Pour tous ces motifs conjugués donnons à la terre sa vraie place, "rendons à la charrue sa dignité". Cette place, elle doit devenir demain, comme elle l'était hier, incontestablement, effectivement la première.

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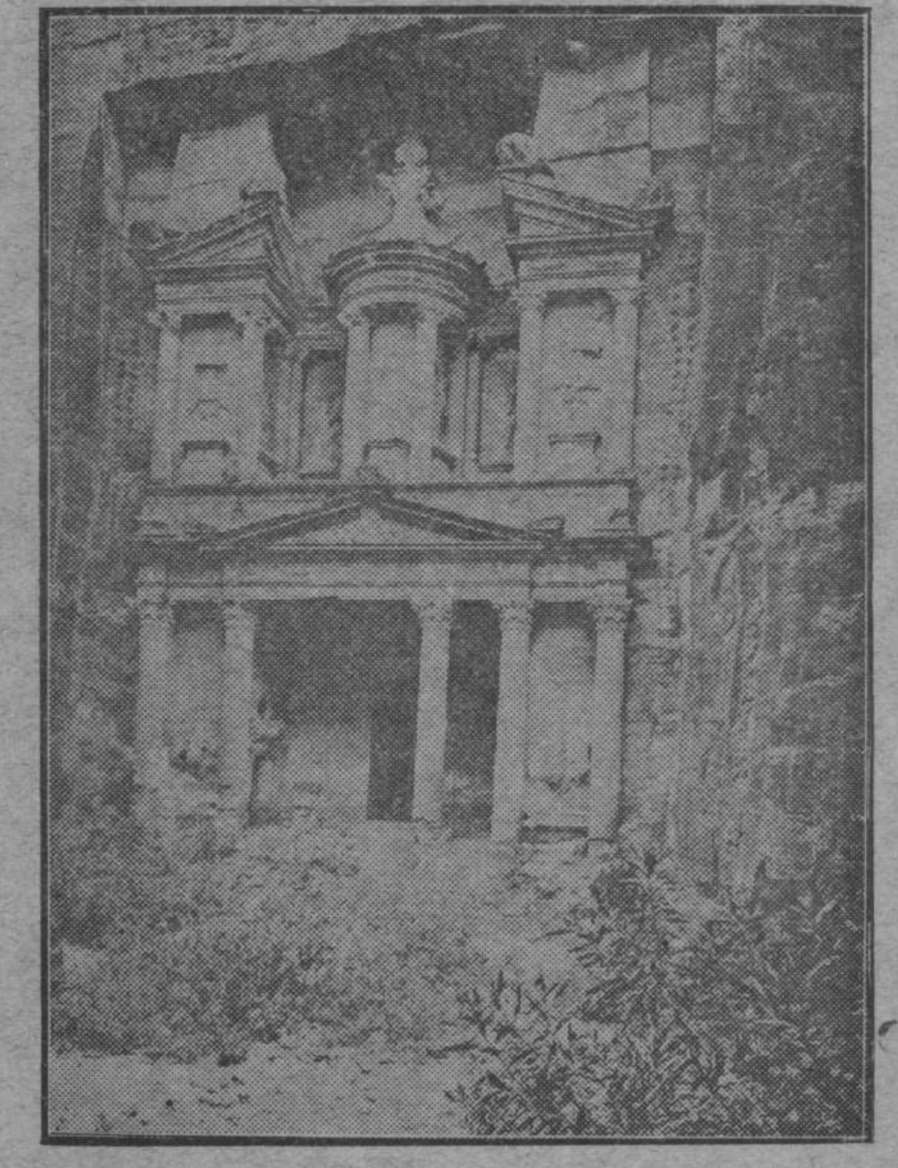
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